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FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

Observations on the Correspondence lately carried on between the Associate Synod of North America and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian church.

Coelum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.—HORACE.

It is quite common for physicians to recommend a change of place as the best remedy for some disorders. But I believe it is generally conceded, that if the disease be in the mind, this remedy seldom proves effectual, because the patient carries the exciting cause of the distemper within him wherever he goes. According to the adage of the ancient poet quoted above, "they who cross the ocean, change the climate but not their disposition." This old proverb has been strikingly exemplified in the conduct of our Reformed Presbyterian brethren in the United States. Their crossing the ocean has not cured them of the disposition to misrepresent the principles and views of Seceders, for which their predecessors in Scotland were so notorious. Were any one to read the Testimony published by the Reformed Presbytery in America, and to compare the statements made in it, in relation to the political principles of Seceders, with statements made in relation to the same subject by the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland; all he could say, is, that they had crossed the ocean. They have changed their residence, but not their disposition—the climate, but not the mind.

In my former communications some account has been given of the principal points of difference, between the Reformed Presbytery and Seceders, about the time when the Reformed Testimony was first published in Scotland. Some notice has also been taken of the four *famous particulars* of the Reformed Presbytery, which they say in the Supplement to their

Testimony, contain "the substance of Seceders' principles, on the head of civil government." And it has also been shewn, that Seceders never for a moment held the principles imputed to them, by the Reformed Presbytery, but constantly complained of the statements, referred to above, as calumnious misrepresentations. This appears from Goodlet's vindication of the Associate Synod, a work published soon after the Reformed Testimony made its appearance. In this work, Mr. Goodlet has shown very clearly, that the sentiments contained in these four articles, are falsely charged upon the Associate Presbytery and Synod; and are, in fact, "gross misrepresentations and reproaches."

It would have been an easy matter to have examined in detail, the pamphlets which have been written, by Reformed Presbyterians and Seceders in Scotland, on the subjects in dispute between the two bodies, and to have shewn that Seceders have invariably disavowed the political principles imputed to them by Reformed Presbyterians; while Reformed Presbyterians have persisted in ascribing to them principles which they never held, and then have testified against them for holding them. But this would have been a useless labour, and no way necessary to a correct understanding of the state of the controversy, which continues nearly the same as it was at the time of the publication of Mr. Goodlet's pamphlet; save only with this difference, that when Seceders found that the Reformed Presbyterians did not impute these principles to them from ignorance, but apparently from a design to misrepresent their views, and to mislead the ignorant, they turned from them as unfair disputants, unworthy of further notice; and on this account the controversy now lies in a dormant state.

It now remains that we turn our attention to the conduct of Reformed Presbyterians in this country, in misrepresenting the principles and views of Seceders. And as I purposed only to give such hints and sketches of the history of the two bodies, and of their behaviour to each other, as might help the reader to understand the correspondence that has been lately carried on between the Associate Synod of North America and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian church, I shall not dwell on their history further than may be necessary for this purpose. I shall therefore pass over the proceedings of the Rev. Messrs. Cuthbertson, Linn, and Dobbin, who constituted the first Reformed Presbytery in the United States, and who afterwards united themselves to part of the Associate Presbytery, to form a new denomination called the Associate Reformed Church. Nor shall I detain the reader with any account of the re-organization of the Reformed Presbytery, but proceed to notice some of the misrepresentations of the

principles of Seceders, which are found in their Testimony, ratified and approved by that body in 1806, and which so far as known to me, is the first exhibition of their principles published by authority of the Reformed Presbytery in America.

In this performance they are justly considered as approving of the conduct of their brethren in Scotland, in relation to Seceders, because without making any exception to the misrepresentations so often mentioned, they speak of the Scotch Testimony as "a valuable document of the church's faithfulness." But the Reformed Presbytery in America have far exceeded their brethren in Scotland for their calumnious aspersions. Not content with sanctioning their false charges and reproaches, they have thought fit to try their own ingenuity, and they have unhappily succeeded in fabricating some additional misrepresentations. These may be seen at length in Reformation Principles Exhibited, Part First, pp. 112—117. Every Seceder, who reads these pages, if he be at all acquainted with the principles which he professes, will know that the statements contained in them are a mere fiction of the Reformed Presbytery. Nay, I will venture to affirm, that if any disinterested person will take the trouble to compare the assertions made in these pages, with the professed principles and views of Seceders, he cannot but perceive that they are a barefaced fabrication. It may seem a serious matter to bring such a charge as this against a religious community, who have so much to say in shewing forth their *own praises*, as our Reformed Presbyterian brethren.* It is indeed with great pain that the writer of this article makes this assertion, but he is perfectly satisfied that truth requires that it ought to be made. Moreover, he thinks he can shew to the satisfaction of every candid person, not only that the charges brought against Seceders by the Reformed Presbytery, are totally inconsistent with truth, but also that the Reformed Synod have distinctly admitted that the principles unjustly imputed to Seceders, are inferences of *their own*, while they continue to testify against Seceders for holding them as their principles.—This no doubt will appear strange sort of conduct for a Reformed Synod, but the reader may rest satisfied that what I now affirm is perfectly true, and I think I shall be able to

* They say of themselves, that they are like ancient Israel, as a dew among the nations.—That they are the only people who witness for the whole of the covenanted Reformation.—That while others garnish the tombs of the martyrs, they alone follow the steps which they have marked with their blood.—A fine character truly, which they give themselves, but there is high authority for saying that self-praise is no proof of real excellence. Solomon says, There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

make it appear so, in reviewing the late correspondence between the two Synods which has been published by the Reformed Synod, and which I shall now proceed to consider.

Many members of the Associate Synod had observed, with much concern, the misrepresentations of some of their principles, as these are set forth in the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian church. The subject was occasionally mentioned by some members, at several meetings of Synod, and it was suggested that something should be done for the vindication of the truth. It was also thought to be a duty that they owed to the Reformed Synod, to endeavour to persuade them to discontinue a practice which appeared to be dishonourable, as well as sinful, according to the divine commandment, (Levit. ix. 17.)—"Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Accordingly, the Associate Synod, at their meeting in Philadelphia in May, 1826, directed a friendly letter to be sent to the Reformed Synod, on the subject of these misrepresentations. In this letter, they gently hinted at the inconsistency of their high pretensions, as witnesses for the truth, with their conduct in imputing to them principles which they had never held; as this was to be against the truth and not for the truth. They then directed the attention of the Reformed Synod to six statements in their Testimony, of which they thought they had just reason to complain,* reserving to themselves the right to notice some others afterwards, and in the conclusion of their letter they expressed a hope that they would take such measures as might obviate the pernicious effects of these misrepresentations.

The Reformed Synod, at their meeting in May, 1827, referred the above mentioned letter to their committee of foreign correspondence, who in their report, gave it as their opinion that it merited very particular attention, and that it ought to be hailed as an incipient step towards the final removal of the causes of dissention. They also recommended the appointment of a committee, to confer by word or writing with the Associate Synod, or with any committee they might see proper to appoint, and that a letter be sent in answer to the one they had received. The Reformed Synod adopted the report of their committee, and in their letter to the Associate Synod,† they disclaimed all intention of bearing false Testimony against their neighbours, while they admitted that controversies on very minute topics, carried on for several years, by different writers, might have led to misunderstandings and

* See Minutes of Reformed Synod, pp. 164—170; or, Rel. Mon. vol. vi. pp. 124—129.

† Minutes of Reformed Synod, pp. 171—173. Rel. Mon. vol. vi. pp. 129—131.

misrepresentations, which an impartial reviewer might find it in his power to correct. They professed to receive with pleasure the Associate Synod's disavowal of the six tenets mentioned in their letter, as unjustly imputed to them, and promised to take prompt measures to make this disavowal known to their churches. They also professed their readiness to correct any misrepresentations into which they might have fallen, respecting things in controversy with our fathers, although they were not prepared to say that the writings of the Secession never afforded ground to believe the tenets in question to have been principles of the Associate church in times past.

When the Associate Synod received this letter they thought they had every reason to be satisfied with the professed readiness of the Reformed Synod to correct the misrepresentations of which they had complained. But as they had said in their letter, that they were not prepared to say, that the writings of the Secession never afforded ground to believe these tenets to have been principles of the Associate church, it became their duty to call upon them to state the grounds they might have for the assertions made in their Testimony. Accordingly, in a second letter addressed to the Reformed Synod, dated Philadelphia, 4th June, 1828, the Associate Synod, after expressing their desire that the two bodies might be brought to coincide in their views of truth and duty, according to the word of God, proceeded to shew that there were chiefly two things which tended to widen the difference between them. First, their imputing to them tenets without so much as quoting their words, which were supposed to express them. And secondly, the language used by the Reformed Synod, to express the sentiments held by themselves and by Seceders, was such as they knew not how to reconcile with candour and fairness. They again disavowed the tenets, unjustly imputed to them in the publication entitled *Reformation Principles Exhibited*, and declared that they had always disavowed them. They also intimated to the Reformed Synod that they cordially approved of their proposal to appoint a committee to correspond with theirs, and as they were not prepared to say that the writings of the Secession never afforded ground for imputing such sentiments to them, they further proposed that the committee of the Reformed Synod, should lay before their committee, those parts of the writings of Seceders in which they thought the tenets in question were contained. And in the conclusion of their letter, they informed them that by the writings of Seceders must be understood their subordinate standards, for which alone they held themselves responsible, because these only had been judicially sanctioned by them.

According to what has just been stated, the Associate Synod appointed a committee of their number to confer with the committee of the Reformed Synod, and directed them to transmit their letter to that Synod, and also to intimate to their committee that they were appointed to receive any communication they might think proper to lay before them. All this was accordingly done, as will be seen by referring to the minutes of the Reformed Synod, p. 188, or to Religious Monitor, vol. vi. p. 131.

Thus far the correspondence was carried on in a consistent and honourable manner, and thus far no blame can be attached to the Reformed Synod in this matter. Nay, some of those members of the Associate Synod who were but little acquainted with the tactics of Reformed Presbyterians, were so convinced of the candour of the Reformed Synod, that they really thought that they would either direct their committee to attempt to state the grounds they might have for the assertions they had made in their Testimony, or if they should not venture to do this, that they would correct the misrepresentations, which they had declared their readiness to do in their first letter. But others who were better acquainted with the Reformed way of managing matters of this sort, were not quite so sanguine in their expectations. It must indeed have appeared to all, that the Reformed Synod were shut up to one or other of these alternatives, by their own voluntary offer, from which they could not recede with honour; but then it was obvious that they could do it with dishonour. Accordingly, that they might get rid of their own proposal, they had recourse to one of those slippery arts, for which Reformed Presbyterians have been so remarkable. They had stated to the Associate Synod that they had referred the whole subject to a committee of conference, who were directed to correspond with them in such manner as they might see cause to direct. And that body, relying on their good faith, had appointed a committee, and proposed to the Reformed Synod that they should direct *their* committee to lay before them the grounds they had for the assertions they had made. Now, who would not suppose that the Reformed Synod in these circumstances, if they regarded their own honour, would have felt themselves bound to direct their committee to lay before the committee of the Associate Synod, the reasons they had for imputing to them such principles? Or if they had no reasons to lay before them, (which was probably the case,) did not truth and honour require that they should say so? Or if they found they had no reasons, and wanted candour to acknowledge this, did not decency require that they should at least offer some apology for their fluctuating conduct? And

who will not be filled with astonishment and regret to see the *Reformed Synod* taking those very steps, which they could not but know would render the appointment of a committee of the Associate Synod, which they themselves had first suggested, a useless ceremony? Instead of requesting their committee to lay their reasons before the committee of the Associate Synod, the Reformed Synod, at their meeting in August, 1828, directed their committee to transmit to them a letter, addressed to the Associate Synod. This effectually prevented both the committees from doing any thing in the matter, and effectually tied up the hands of that of the Associate Synod, for it could not be supposed that they would undertake, without any authority, to answer a letter addressed to the Synod.—Nor is it at all reasonable to suppose, that that body would have appointed a committee only for the purpose of transmitting to them the Reformed Synod's letter, which every body knows could have been sent quite as conveniently through the post-office. Thus it will be seen that the whole affair of the committee and conference turned out to be nothing but a reformed *ruse de guerre*.

The Reformed Synod, at their meeting in August, 1828, ventured on another stratagem scarcely less discreditable than the one just mentioned, and in which, it is probable no religious community but themselves would have engaged. They undertook to reiterate, in their letter, the greater part of the injurious misrepresentations of which the Associate Synod had complained, and then to publish the correspondence, in its unfinished state, and along with it the letter they had last addressed to the Associate Synod, long before it could be submitted to that body. This was so inconsistent with the usages of civilized society, that the Associate Synod could not help noticing it as they did, in the following resolution, copied from their Minutes. "Resolved that this Synod express their surprise at the conduct of the Reformed Presbyterian church, in publishing to the world the correspondence between them and this Synod, before the issue of the correspondence, and before their last letter was received by us."*

It must be allowed that the Reformed Synod have displayed some ingenuity by this kind of procedure, but surely they can gain no credit by it. Indeed it is not easy to see what motive they could have for practising this curious artifice, unless it might originate in an ardent desire to present their views in a more advantageous light to the public, than they could have done, had an answer to their letter been published along with it. For surely they could not expect to make any

* See Minutes of the Associate Synod, for 1829, p. 87.

very favourable impression upon the Associate Synod by this kind of usage.* But although these stratagems deserve to be condemned, and no doubt will be disapproved of by every honourable mind, yet they are not more reprehensible than the letter itself. It seems to be a renewed attempt to impute to the Associate church principles which she has always condemned, and which the Associate Synod in their communications had just told them they distinctly disavowed and had always disavowed. It is truly amusing to see the Reformed Synod insisting, that their neighbours of the Associate Synod ought to believe certain principles, which they, of their own free will, have thought fit to impute to them, whether they are disposed to do it or not; and to persist in it as if their very existence, as a Reformed Synod, depended on their getting their own people, and as many others as possible, to believe their misrepresentations. This surely looks as if all was not right, and gives much reason to suspect that there are some rotten planks in the constitution of the Reformed church. But I must reserve the remarks I had intended to make on the letter, to which I am now ready to proceed, for another opportunity. A. H.

FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.
SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The *signs of the times* ought to be attentively observed by all who profess to follow the direction of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. When his disciples asked him to tell them—"When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?"—In answering them, he gave the criteria of *all* the times, till time shall be no more. Therefore, a due respect for his authority, as the great infallible Teacher of the church, requires that we give diligent attention to understand the *signs of our own times*.

Our own interest, also, requires this; and all the interests for which, as men and Christians, we ought to be concerned. Because, in a due exercise of the mind on the signs of the times, under the directing influence of the word, lies much of the soul's fellowship with God. Whatever connection the events of the day may have with the motives of men or the agency of other beings, they are filling up the counsel of him who has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will."

* *Vane Ligur, frustra que animis elate superbis,
Nequicquam patrias tentasti lubricus artes.*—VIRGIL.
On others practise thy Ligurian arts,
The stratagems and tricks of little hearts
Are lost on me.—Dryden.

Herein he manifests himself gloriously; to behold which, is the Christian's supreme desire and chief happiness. To his enemies, he shows himself only in "justice and judgment" mingled with forbearance; but to his beloved church—"in mercy and truth" also. Amidst all that is going on, the blessed and glorious work of Redemption is advancing; which, of all other works in creation, is the most engaging to the believers heart; not because of himself only, but because all that concerns and interests God's elect, whether they be not yet existing, or in a state of unrenewed nature, or of progressive holiness, or in heaven, is comprehended in it. All eyes in heaven are intent on this; and why should not those on earth be? But this requires us to know what is doing in our times, that we may be able to say—"great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." Rev xv. 3, 4. The right understanding of the word, is confessed by all to be of exceedingly great interest. But the events of Providence, in other words, the signs of the times, run parallel to it. Every thing that is coming to pass is falling out according to some word of scripture—in the execution of its threatnings—in the fulfilling of its promises and predictions,—illustrating its principles, or enforcing its commands. Therefore, in order that its doctrines, its reproofs, its corrections and instructions in righteousness, may have their full weight upon us, it is necessary that we consider the events of the times. Without this we are in inconceivable hazard of wresting them to our own destruction, and of finally missing the way of salvation. Had the Pharisees been as much acquainted with the signs of their times, as they seem to have been with the face of the sky, it would have been a powerful, if not a successful means for bringing them to receive Jesus as the Christ, and so to have escaped destruction and perdition. And if we discern not the signs of our times, we may be left to give heed to those wild deceptive cries—"Lo! here is Christ: Lo! he is there;" and so perish in our delusion. For, at what time soever, since the days of Christ, any deceiver or enthusiast hath come forth, to set up the figments of his own heart, this hath been his advertisement; and a great incongruous multitude hath followed such. But Christ is in his present truth, and the word of his patience; and no where on earth can there be so near and sweet fellowship with him as there.

A knowledge of the times is attainable. All cannot attain to the same measure of it. None can fully comprehend it; because the height and depth, the length and breadth of infinite perfection is in it. There is much that comes not within the sphere of created vision. The times and the seasons the Father hath reserved in his own power. The full bearing which

present events may have upon the future, cannot be calculated by mortals, because it is held in the hand of Him who is sovereign in all his ways; and he directs and modifies it as it pleases him. Still, there is much important knowledge of the times attainable. And while we guard against that presumptuous curiosity which seeks to be wise above what is written, we ought to keep also from the opposite extreme of neglecting that which is revealed. It is not by miracles that we are to acquire this knowledge, nor by intuitive glances, but by patient perseverance, reading the word, meditation, prayer, and a careful observation of what is passing. In this way, it is to be presumed that Moses had arrived at the conclusion that the time of Israel's deliverance drew near—that the men of Issacher had understanding of the times, and what Israel ought to do—that Daniel found that the term of the captivity was nearly ended—and that several, at the time of Christ's appearing, were led to look and wait for him. By the same steps are we to search after it; and from God's own word we have reason to expect, that our success will have some proportion to our diligence.

But any pains to stir up the mind to this study, may at present seem superfluous. For "the signs of the times" is the general topic. One would think that the eyes of the christian world were intently fixed upon it—that the pulpit and the press were labouring for expression to the universal wonder and amazement at the grand developements of the times—that the utmost confidence prevailed, and doubt or hesitation had scarcely a place, except with *bigots*, the *dross* of this pure time—that we are the happy generation destined to behold Millennial glory. The day has dawned. It cannot be doubted!

With all due respect to the opinions of the day, I hesitate much whether we have yet got upon the vein of this wisdom; because it lies very deep and is not found by gazing at the stars, but by the persevering digging of the miner. Neither does it break upon the view all of a sudden, as a meteor in the air, to make people cry out—"Lo! it is here: or, Lo! it is there." It is found out by a slow process. We must first clear away the rubbish; break off its incrustings; put it into the crucible; and try it by the fire of *His word*. When it is found, it does not fill men's minds with the marvellous; nor make them dream dreams, nor see visions, nor fall into ecstasies; and least of all, does it incline to much loud talking.—The men that are so acted upon, by the signs of the times, are only feeding upon ashes; a deceived heart hath turned them aside—and they are in extreme hazard of finally missing their way. There hath always been something cheering in the signs of the times. "God is in the midst of Zion, nothing

shall remove her:" she may be very low, but in the midst of deserved judgment, he will remember mercy, and will not make a full end. So that we shall always be taught, by the signs of the times, to sing of mercy as well as judgment. But it is always a grave subject, and will press upon the mind that rightly apprehends it, weighty things. That mind will find in these times weighty reasons for God's two prophets, still to prophesy in *sack cloth and ashes*, and for all that follow them to lament and weep with supplication and fasting. Weighty reasons to tremble for the ark of God—to gird on the whole armour, and go forth to the help of God, against his enemies. If at this time the multitude hath first attained to the true knowledge of the times, it is indeed a rare exception. For when the signs of approaching judgment were given out to the old world, it was not the multitude that noticed and understood them, but the very few. When the signs of Israel's approaching deliverance out of the house of servants were to be seen, they were not understood by the *many*. It was only a few of the poor and obscure that saw, understood, and rejoiced in the signs of Christ's first coming. And when Popery began to show itself, only the few observed it. So far, then, as the past teaches here, it teaches the necessity of using the greatest caution in admitting popular sentiments respecting the times. They have hitherto been erroneous, and may be so now.

It is much to be feared that many, very many, satisfy themselves with hearing and telling wonderful things about the signs of the times, as the whole of their concern in the matter; and that many others avail themselves of the popular opinions, to turn the current of enthusiasm and blind zeal to serve their own personal or party designs: whereas the chief end of the understanding of the times, should be to find out what Israel ought to do. No doubt there are many who assure themselves, that this is the very purpose to which they are applying it. But if they are labouring themselves and exciting others to labour with them, in setting up the figments of their own brain, instead of the infallible counsel of God, it were a thousand times better for them and their followers, to have continued ignorant of the signs of the times. For while their projects must all fail, and come to folly and confusion, the righteous God may allow them to fall, through their own pride and vanity, into the snare of the Devil. If men imagine that the right understanding of the times, either supercedes or adds to Revelation, it is a gross delusion. The meaning is not—*What new thing* ought Israel to do—*what new way of fellowship, or worship*, ought he to set up—or *what new way of explaining and believing the doctrines of the Bible*—nor

what new and untried, and unauthorized scheme ought he to invent and execute, for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. But—what ought he to defend and practise as Christ's *present truth*? Where is "the *faith and patience of the saints*?" There is the same rule of action, which he will find to have been long since clearly revealed in the word, and long since traversed by the generation of the righteous. If any thing can be said, or written, that will stir up the Christian's mind to greater watchfulness and diligence, in present duty, and to a greater interest in present truth; if any thing that will guard him against the artful deceptions, beyond number, practised by Satan and cunning, wicked men, it is an imperious duty at present. It is truly distressing to think of the effects produced by the popular opinions respecting the times. Not only hath the Millennium itself come, but it hath brought with it a *new faith, and a new practise*. The old way of "holding fast that which we have," and striving for it to banishment, prisons and death, is no longer to be endured. The connection between faith and practice, so much and justly respected in days of old, is now dissolved to make way for the *sweet liberty* of being *inconsistent*. Instead of labouring to mould and fashion society into the shape of Bible truth, in which God's people have been employed since the *beginning of the world*, the truth must now be taken out of the Bible, like rough stone out of a quarry, and chiseled, and polished, to suit the present genius and taste of society! The way in which Luther, Calvin, Knox, and a thousand others, have explained and taught the doctrines of grace, will no longer answer the purpose. The public mind is entirely carried away captive by these new modes of believing and doing, as it were with a new and lovely song; and whatsoever does not chime with its music, raises disgust and indignation. Were the consequences such only as follow the relinquishment of a theory founded only in human prudence, it were no great matter; but seeing God hath sworn that salvation shall come *only* through that faith and practice of the truth, which the church hath held from the beginning—that Christ prays for it only in this way—and that the Holy Ghost will apply it only in this way: when we see and hear this same truth deliberately cast away, as a piece of antiquated bigotry; not by the ignorant devotee, but by the learned—the masters in Israel! we shudder, when we think what *MAY* be the dismal end of it to the souls of men!

The idea entertained by many, respecting the times, is that they are only an indication of the approaching fulfilment of the prophecies; and all their anxiety is, to behold the wonderful events. These men forget that there are signs in the earth beneath, which more immediately call our attention, than those

in heaven above. There are signs of the present condition and approaching destiny of nations and churches, which tell the Lord's people, not in very obscure language, which way they ought to go, and where they will be safe. But if they must needs be always gazing up into heaven, this itself is a sign, and a sure one, that ere long they will stumble and fall.

In seeking after the understanding of the times, it is necessary to distinguish, with painful accuracy, between what is to be ascribed to the motives and agency of men, and what is to be accredited to God, who, in his mysterious providence, makes good come out of evil—the wrath of man to praise him—and all the motives and actions of his creatures, whether good or evil, to subserve his purpose of mercy and grace.—At any time, unless we attend to this distinction, uncertainty and confusion must mark our progress: but at present it is an imperious duty to observe it; because a shameful dishonesty prevails among visible Christians, in reckoning what is done. For if, in the most remote connection, any good whatever follows their doings, they *must have* it marked to *their* account. If they see but the *shadow* or hear the *sound* of good, though it be nothing but the lying fiction of some religious periodical, it must be set to the credit of christian zeal and charity. But though there be ever so much evil done—though truth be buried—the ordinances of Christ corrupted—multitudes deluded—the kingdom of satan advanced, and all the interests of religion stabbed under the fifth rib, by the vilest hypocrisy and lies, there is no marking of it at all.

We ought, when entering on this subject, to beware that we are not strongly prejudiced in our own favour, through which we can hardly perceive any *evil signs* in ourselves, though to others they may be most apparent, and to us of the highest consequence to attend to them. If we see a man become indifferent about his business; disregard his oaths and promises, and give the reins to his appetites, we at once pronounce it a sign that his infamy and ruin are not far off. Why is it that the parallel of these, in nations and churches, lead not, as generally, to a similar conclusion, and excite not greater alarm? Because, they occupy the same ground with the individual supposed, and view all these things with a jaundiced eye.—*He* is not any alarmed at his own conduct. *He* sees no danger ahead, and easily persuades himself that there *is* none.—*He* does not charge himself with censurable conduct. What *others* are pleased to reprehend as vice, *he* relishes as the sweet morsels of enjoyment. And with his conscience satisfied and stilled by false reasonings, he pursues his course without apprehension, and with increasing momentum, until the frightful precipice comes in his view: but then it is too late. So it is

with *societies* of men and Christians ; the most palpable dereliction of principle is imposed upon the public conscience, as the "march of mind" towards perfection. The grossest ecclesiastical and political corruptions, are palmed off under the fair names of freedom, charity, and what not. And the watchmen upon the walls, with a loud voice, amidst the slumbering multitudes, cry—"All's well." But approaching destruction is only so much the greater, and the signs of it the more certain. If now, an individual or two should disturb this false security, and sound an *alarm*, they shall, like the prophets of old, be instantly denounced as disturbers of the public tranquility—enemies to their country—traitors—false prophets, unworthy to live. But should that deter them ? I answer, No. The true patriot, the faithful servant of Jesus Christ, disregarding his own ease or emolument, will lift up his voice like a trumpet, if perhaps he may arouse them from their slumber and cause them to open their eyes upon their own danger.

God sometimes sovereignly delays the work of judgment, and sometimes prevents it altogether, with mercy ; at other times he hastens forward the strange work. We, therefore, cannot discover by any signs, how near or how remote any events may be. To attempt this, would be presumptuously to set limits to the Holy One of Israel. But neither must we, on the other hand, indulge ourselves in sin a little longer, in the hope that judgment will linger a long time, perhaps all our days, or be averted altogether ; for this were in the most aggravated manner to tempt him, by turning his forbearance into a reason for offending him. We may be assured, at all times, that the visible church will survive every storm, and continue to the end. That though he may sorely chastise her, yet will he not make a full end,—and likewise, that the work of redemption is, upon the whole, advancing, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding ; but it is not revealed, and cannot be found out, how long or short a time divine forbearance may be continued to this or that church or nation in particular. So long as a society of Christians, formed on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, holds fast what it has already attained, so long we are sure it will stand ; but the moment in which it begins to let any thing slip, and to fall from first love, that security is lost. And how soon judgment may overtake it, and how far it may proceed, we cannot tell. Neither hath he so revealed the promises or the prophecies, that the most quick sighted can discover the month or the year in which they shall be accomplished. All attempts to calculate the time exactly, have hitherto failed. Events which men would have to be near, God hath, in his sovereign counsel, placed farther back and *vice versa*. Therefore, the work of reform ought to be set about

without any delay. "What thy hands find to do, do it with thy might," for we know not what judgments a single day may bring forth. For the accomplishment of the promise, wait in hope, believing that he is faithful who hath promised, who also will do it; but chiefly view it through that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for,—for by this means, it may be *now* as much to our comfort and salvation, as the event itself will be, to them in whose time it shall fall.

It is not easy to give a general definition of the term *sign*, that will include all the cases in which it is used. Frequently it is understood to be a present indication of something future; but sometimes it is applied to what is present. When the morning star arises, it is a sign of approaching day. When the sky is red in the evening, it is considered a sign of fair weather; but in the morning, it indicates the reverse. The fowls of heaven, by their migrations, are signs of summer and winter. Every one knows that the long shadows of the evening tell that the sun is about setting,—and that old age and infirmity intimate the near approach of death. The hard dry cough, the hurried respiration, flushed countenance, hectic fever and quick pulse, are signs of the fatal disease, consumption. And there are circumstances analagous to these, which signify with equal certainty, whether regarded or not, the approaching dissolution of nations, and the final apostacy of churches.

The signs of the times are either ordinary, extraordinary, or miraculous. The angel gave Zacharias a miraculous sign, that he should have a son by Elizabeth, who should, in the power and spirit of Elias, prepare the way of the Lord.—But that which was given to the shepherds, though not miraculous, was yet extraordinary. The preservation of Moses, when the commandment of Pharaoh required the death of all male infants among the Hebrews, was to them not a miraculous but a very extraordinary sign. But for *miraculous* signs we are not to look. Those we are called most frequently to consider, are such as come in the ordinary course of events.—As superstitious credulity makes extraordinary and marvelous signs, of dreams, phantoms, and whispers; no small degree of the ancient abominable superstitious astrology, holds a place in the catalogue of signs, with many, in this land of light and liberty: but all such we abhor. Nothing ought to come into the account, but such as either *exhibit cause* sufficient to produce the expected event, or is mentioned in the word as a sign. "To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in them."

There are some *good signs* of our times, which it concerns us carefully to distinguish, amidst all the confusion and crime which characterizes them; and record them to the faithfulness of our New Covenant, God, with thanksgiving. And there are also many *bad signs*, which, for the sake of ourselves and posterity, we ought to publish with a loud and warning voice, that whether men will hear or forbear, we may at least save our own souls. To each of these, I purpose, as God may be pleased to help, to speak a few things, subjoining some of the "things which Israel ought to do." But lest this advertisement should create a disappointment to some, I shall first mention some things of which our times have *no signs*.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

STRICTURES ON STUART'S COMMENTARY ON THE HEBREWS.

The utility of examining a literary performance, in order to ascertain the solidity of its conclusions, increases in proportion to the importance of its subjects, the evil tendency of its sentiments, and the reputation which it may have gained.—When divine things are the theme, the work cannot be unimportant; for it may become the savour, either of life unto life, or of death unto death. The subjects which are considered in the work before us, are most important. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." But the epistle to the Hebrews is of peculiar comparative importance. The divine dignity of Christ's person; the high excellence of his mediatorial character; and the infinite value and efficacy of his sacrifice; are truths which are herein exhibited. Error, in handling truths of this description, cannot be otherwise than extremely dangerous. And here we must say, that the work before us, does, according to our views of scriptural doctrine, contain error.

But even when the tendency of a work is evil;—if it may not have a wide circulation; if it may not receive the sanction of public opinion; or if it may be likely, from neglect, to pass into oblivion; a review of it for the public would be worse than useless. The work before us has already been widely circulated. Nor is it likely soon to pass into oblivion; for in some respects, it has real merits; and when merit is wanting, it is too well suited to the taste of many of this generation.

The errors contained in this work, therefore, should be met. We had hoped that some one, more experienced in such labours, would come forward to this task. But, so far as we know, this has not been done: And we are sorry to

add, that even some who are *reputed* orthodox, commend this work with almost unqualified praise.

Although living in comparative obscurity, and without much experience in writing for the public eye, we, "being set for the defence of the gospel," feel constrained to oppose, with all candour, and with all deference to the abilities of the author and his admirers, some of the sentiments contained in the volumes before us. While we must call in question the author's soundness in the faith, we have no wish to derogate any thing from his literary fame. Our only desire is to vindicate what we, with the whole heart, believe to be Bible truth.

It is not our design to attempt a regular review of the work. We purpose merely to meet those sentiments which are at variance with our views of scripture.

In the preface of the first volume, our author maintains "as the church advances nearer to that state in which the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, a better understanding of the scriptures may be confidently hoped for and expected." If the christian public could be induced to embrace this sentiment in its intended latitude, it would be much easier for those who are desirous of change, to effect their purposes. Let it be believed that the old divines laboured in mists, and clouds, and darkness, when they embraced and defended the doctrines called calvinism; and that a new tide of light is pouring into the minds of our own day's divines; and multitudes, who now prefer the old system, would be more favourably disposed towards the new. It was policy in our author to promote this idea. even in the preface to his work. It would greatly subserve his purpose, if he could superinduce the belief, that a much greater light in christian doctrine, than has ever yet blessed our world, is about to arise:—Or rather, that it has already arisen, and shines upon us with double splendour through the medium of his works.

But let the truth of this opinion be tested:—Let two questions be answered. 1st. Are our new-light divines entitled to more confidence than the old, whose doctrines are now so strenuously opposed? 2d. Are we to expect *great* improvement in the knowledge of Bible doctrine, even when the church shall have come to that state in which the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea?—In answering the first, we may observe,—that although the sixteenth century was a time of general and thick darkness; yet amid this darkness a few luminaries arose, exceeded in splendour by none, since the days of the apostles. Even the boastful theologians of our own days are not greater lights.—Lest any should attribute this opinion of ours to a blind reverence for antiquity, we cheerfully submit the reasons of our be-

lief. They are taken from the comparative endowments, attainments, diligence and integrity of the old and new Reformers.

Calvin, and his contemporaries who accorded with him in those doctrines which are usually designated by his name, are, no doubt, among the number whose light must be eclipsed by the superior brightness of our modern luminaries. It is not unfair then, to select such as Calvin for the comparison.

Do deep penetration and sound judgment give great advantage in the attainment of a right understanding of the scriptures? Who of our moderns give evidence of deeper penetration and sounder judgment than the old Reformers have evinced? Are various knowledge and solid learning important? Who among the new-lights excel the old in these attainments? Are extensive reading, and deep and thorough research profitable?—Nor do our moderns appear to greater advantage even in these respects. Our author says, that “interpretations *a priori*, have long enough had their sway in the church, and that a more judicious and protestant mode of thinking and reasoning has commenced.” There is here, at least, an insinuation that this mode of thinking and reasoning is almost exclusively of modern use. But who of our moderns can boast of more independence of spirit, and originality of thought, than those bold and intrepid Reformers, who dared, even with the Bible in their hand, to confront the whole force of the enemies of truth? Who of our moderns are more free from the charge of “interpretations *a priori*,” than those holy men whose preconceived opinions, from early instruction, and whose prejudices, from the weight of the church’s *supposed* authority, were wholly opposed to the interpretations which led to the doctrines which they afterwards maintained at the hazard of all that was dear in life? (We cannot refrain from quoting in this place a sentence from Pool, the learned author of the Synopsis: “Calvin’s Commentaries,” says he, “abound in solid discussions of theological subjects, and practical improvements of them. Subsequent writers have borrowed most of their materials from Calvin. And his interpretations adorn the books even of those who repay the obligation by reproaching their master.”)

We wish no one to take our assertion as proof, when we say, that in all these endowments and attainments, the old divines are, at least, not inferior to our boastful moderns. We refer every reader to the writings of both classes, fully convinced that no intelligent, unprejudiced examiner, will rise from the comparison, without a full conviction of the superiority of the old divines. But again—prayer, joined with diligence, is a blessed means for the attainment of scripture knowledge. As

we have not access to their closets, we cannot say our moderns are negligent in the use of this appointed means: But if we judge from the savour of their writings, we cannot help suspecting some of the most eminent of them. But no one can read the writings of the old divines, without the conviction that they were eminently men of prayer. Again—does a love of the truth influence to diligence and carefulness in distinguishing between true and false doctrines? Surely none can pretend a greater love of the truth than those Reformers who, for its sake, fearlessly exposed themselves to all the horrors of persecution and death?

Does the evidence of an impressive sense of the value and importance of the truth, which a writer maintains and defends, inspire a confidence in his honesty and integrity? In whom, then, may we repose the greatest confidence?—In those who thought the doctrines which they defended all important in the matter of man's salvation, and worthy to be defended even at the greatest hazard:—Or, in those who may labour with apparent zeal to maintain their peculiar tenets, as many of our moderns do, and yet, after all, admit that these doctrines, for which they so earnestly contend, are mere *non-essentials*; concerning which, Christians may differ, and yet hold with one another visible church communion?—Let common sense determine.

There are also divines of a later age, whose light is not quite homogeneous with our new-lights. Among these, Dr. Owen is prominent. The notice which this distinguished divine receives from our author is worthy of remark. In the conclusion of the first volume, when enumerating the helps to the study of the epistle to the Hebrews, he thus mentions Owen's Commentary on this epistle: "This work is replete with remarks of a doctrinal and experimental nature. The philology of it will be less valued at this day." The words "at this day" are no doubt emphatical. And our author would no doubt be surprised to find any one "at this day" preferring Dr. Owen to himself, or any other new-light, even as a philologist. But monstrous as this would seem to our author, if it should ever come to his ears, we are not careful to conceal that such is our opinion.

The philologists of the new school are mere etymologists. And while Dr. Owen is by no means their inferior, in this part of philology, he attends also to another important article in scripture philology which the new critics have either discarded or neglected,—the "analogy of faith." Our author may, if he please, call the interpretations, which result from the observation of this analogy, "interpretations *a priori*:" But the divine Interpreter has given this rule of interpretation,—“Hav-

ing, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, if prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion, or analogy of faith." And the man who believes the particular and plenary inspiration of the scriptures, must admit such an analogy: He who does not, when words in their nature are ambiguous from his interpretations by observing this analogy, or coherence of divine truth in the scriptures, will oftentimes fall into error. The writings of the modern German critics are exemplifications of the truth of this remark. They have discarded this divine rule, and their present creed is but little better than a system of refined deism. In fact refined deists have become scripture philologists, and thus have done more to obscure the light of divine truth than all the Paines, and Humes, and Voltaires that have ever lived. Uncharitable as the expression may appear, we cannot withhold it: This notice of Dr. Owen's work by our author, looks too much like an attempt to dissuade the Bible student from an examination of this celebrated work of this celebrated divine. Had Dr. Owen been an antagonist less powerful, in scripture interpretation, he would not have received such a cold commendation. As to all the qualifications for the important work of scripture interpretation, we can with the same confidence, as in the case of the Reformers, refer to the writings of Dr. Owen and many of his contemporaries, to prove the old, equal at least, to our new-lights.

A few words are sufficient in answer to the second question proposed.

Our author thus introduces the famous sentiment under consideration:—"There is an apprehension at present, somewhat extensive, and continually increasing, that no one age, nor any body of men pertaining to it, have done *all* which the human faculties, with the blessing of God, are capable of accomplishing. Christians in this country are coming more and more to believe the church advancing to that state in which the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea." If we mistake not, our author sneeringly imputes to those who prefer the interpretations of the old school, the doctrine, that *no* improvement in scripture knowledge is allowable. If such a charge is insinuated, it is, according to our belief, a false charge. We believe that no intelligent man ever supposed that there is not still room for search, in order to improvement in scripture knowledge. While we readily admit that there is still room for improvement, and liberty and encouragement to make that improvement; we have no idea, that even in the days of Millennial glory, the church will attain to that state which our author "confidently hopes for." It is evident that he expects such an increase of light as will

nearly, or quite, extinguish our old-lights: For if his own light, which according to the representation, is but the mere star-light of the evening, which precedes the Millennial day, is so bright as deservedly to attract attention from the old-lights; what must his "confident expectations" be of the noon-tide splendour of that coming day!

It is manifest that our author introduces the scripture prophecy concerning the knowledge of the Lord which is to fill the earth, as proof of the opinion, that hereafter, there will be a much better understanding of the scriptures. But this is a shameful interpretation from a philologist. This prophecy merely assures us that in the latter day glory, the knowledge of the Lord, which before had been enjoyed by few comparatively, will be more generally diffused. Nor is there any prophetic declaration which establishes the idea of our author.—Neither is it even reasonable. Our old divines, with a diligence unwearied, sought instruction from the original scriptures—the pure fountain. Many of them, particularly the earlier Reformers, gave not their interpretations of these oracles to favour their preconceived opinions; but the very reverse. By the study of the scriptures, their views of scripture truth were completely changed: Their strongest prejudices were overcome; and after much painful search and careful deliberation, their minds, at length, rested in the full conviction even of those truths, which our author would insinuate, are the result of "interpretations *a priori*!" Considering then, the ability, diligence, honesty and independence, of these old fashioned interpreters, what reason have we to expect from any future race of interpreters, such an improvement in scripture knowledge, as our author would have us expect?

We ardently desire that those who design to become teachers of others, would make, (to use the language of our author,) "a candid, patient, long continued, and radical investigation of the language and idiom of the sacred writers;" and we add, keeping in view the analogy of faith:—Such an investigation, we are confident, will secure to the old-light philologists, and interpreters of scripture, the praise of the generations to come; confirm the doctrines embraced by the old Reformers; and convince the world that many of our would-be-new-lights, too nearly resemble those "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

The dangerous tendency of this sentiment of our author is our only apology for the length of this first communication.

EXAMINATOR.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE ASSOCIATE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

DEAR SIR.—Among the various items of important business expected to come before the Associate Synod, at its meeting in May next, I consider the organization of our Theological Seminary as occupying the most prominent place. It is a measure that involves the interests and prospects of the church now and in future ages. The great difficulty that stares us in the face at present is want of funds. At our last meeting an agent was appointed in each Presbytery to solicit contributions. It is high time that these agents were at work, as whatever ulterior measures may be adopted, it seems necessary that the Synod should have before them all the information that can be obtained, as to the prospect of adequate funds, before they proceed to act on the Committee's report. In reflecting upon the subject, I have been impressed with the belief that the Synod was guilty of an omission in not furnishing the agents with uniform subscription lists. Funds will be immediately requisite for the erection of the necessary buildings. And in addition to this, we must have a permanent fund for the payment of at least one Professor's salary, and other necessary expenditures: Some may be able and willing to contribute to the one object—some to the other,—and some to both.

Permit me through the medium of the Monitor to present to the agents and the public, the following blank form of subscription, as one that I believe will answer every practical purpose, and respectfully to remind every one connected with the Secession church, of the obligations which he is under to contribute his mite to this all-important object. Our ministers especially should take the lead, and set an example of liberality to their flocks.

I am respectfully yours,

ANDREW HERON.

We the subscribers pledge ourselves to pay the sums annexed to our names, respectively, for the benefit of the Theological Seminary, under the inspection of the Associate Synod of North America.

Subscriber's names.	Donations for present purposes.		Annual contributions to the permanent fund.	
	\$	cts.	\$	cts.

It is with pleasure we call the attention of our readers to the important subject embraced in this letter. And we cannot doubt, for a moment, but it will receive prompt and efficient attention.

God, in his providence, is now calling upon us for a portion of that worldly substance, which he, in his great and unmerited goodness, has so bountifully bestowed. And we cannot turn a deaf ear to the call, without an obvious violation of duty. If we devise liberal things, the object can easily be accomplished; and we have full confidence that it *will* be accomplished. In our day, the calls upon christian charity, are numerous; and we know, brethren, that many of these calls are unscriptural; yet many of whom we have reason to hope better things, are more ready to give to an object because of its novelty than because it is a commanded duty to give. But we have now presented to us an object unquestionably scriptural,—an object deeply interesting to the glory of God, the cause of his truth, and the salvation not only of our own souls, but also of the souls of those who shall come after us. Let us then, do away the false impression of such as think us illiberal, because we refuse to countenance all the good-doing projects of men; and convince them, by our *practice*, that we are liberal in obedience to all the divine commands.

The necessity, and importance to the church, that a liberal contribution should be made, to enable the Synod to carry their designs into effect, in relation to the more permanent establishment of a Theological Seminary, is so perfectly obvious, that it would be an insult to our readers, should we attempt to bring arguments in support of it.

Selections.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

*Delivered in the Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.
November 7, 1828, by Charles Hodge. Published in the Bib-
lical Repertory.*

Perhaps we owe the reader an apology for so frequent reference to the Presbyterian church, and the publications of her ministers, and of the editors of periodical works, devoted to her interests: though it must be admitted that the Presbyterian church occupies a large field among the religious communities of the United States, and that she has an extensive influence in forming the religious character of the age: And there is much of instruction and warning in her ecclesiastical history, and in her publications, constantly issuing in great abundance from the press. Starting originally from the same foundation, and still holding nearly the same "form of sound words," in her Public Standards, with the Associate church; her present state clearly shows how perfectly natural and easy it is, for a body of professing Christians, to let go their profession and fall into many and ruinous errors, while they imagine the cause of truth and righteousness to be flourishing in no ordinary degree. For it is certain the Presbyterian church considers herself "a queen among nations," and it is equally certain that her faith and discipline are materially

different from, and in some instances, diametrically opposite to, what they once were. This is the natural consequence of an unscriptural increase of numbers; for such is the frailty of human nature, that men are almost imperceptibly led to imagine that their usefulness will be extended by relaxing their adherence to some things which are most odious to the natural propensities of the human mind; while exactly the reverse is the case: Because, if you flatter the unscriptural prejudices of men, on one point, they immediately claim the surrender of another, until the whole system of Revelation is perverted. This arises from two causes—1st. The native tendency of error, operating on the corrupt principles of the heart. 2d. The ordinary mode of God's dealing with his people: He has commanded his people to hold fast all his words, and when they let any of them go, greater delusion is sent as a punishment for the delinquency.

Again: Men of corrupt minds, who join themselves to the visible kingdom of the Redeemer from impure motives, will most assuredly look for that kind of profession which is most popular: Hence the declaration of our Lord—"Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Luke, vi. 26: Though we do not mean that all who join a popular profession are influenced by corrupt motives; for there are times when a good degree of favour is shown to the truth, and we trust the time is coming when true religion shall become popular; but the dispositions, pursuits, and practices of men, must undergo a great change.

Again: The present, is unquestionably an age of licentiousness; hence it is utterly impossible that evangelical religion should be popular: Therefore, to be spoken against and to be *separated from the company* of every other body of professing Christians in existence, is no evidence that we should let go the profession of such points, as render us obnoxious to others; but is rather an evidence that we should hold them fast: For, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." Luke, vi. 22.

It forms no part of our intention to bring railing accusations, against any denomination, much less against any body of Presbyterians; neither do we expect to obtain a hearing from those of whose principles and practices we thus freely speak, excepting in here and there a single instance. But it is of high importance to those, for whose benefit our work is more immediately designed, that they possess a correct knowledge of other denominations, so that they may conduct towards them agreeably to the rules of the word. It has always been true, that those who most need religious knowledge, are the most slow to seek it, and should we be deterred from our exertions to disseminate correct principles, from the consideration, that they who most need their influence would not be benefitted, we should desist almost wholly from exertion.

From these considerations, therefore, we think it not altogether unprofitable, that the attention of our readers should be occasionally turned to some things which show the *peculiarities* of other denominations: But we have no feelings of hostility towards the Presbyterian church, and we are not conscious of being influenced by *party* considerations. We believe that church

to have been for a long time going wrong, and that she is still going wrong ; which cannot fail to excite unfeigned sorrow in the minds of all who rightly prize the truths of revelation ; and could we discover indications of a return to the ancient landmarks of her profession, it would fill us with rejoicing.— But no such indications are at present discoverable. It is true, we now and then hear a faint murmur from the more orthodox of her ministers, which dies away as unheeded as the breeze that wafts it, to be heard no more. True it is, you may now and then meet with something that savours of the richness of gospel truth ; but then it is partly in the language of Ashdod and partly in that of the Jews ; and brings only to the mind a mournful recollection of the departed glory of the Presbyterian church. Of this character is the Lecture now before us. It appears to have been the offspring of a lucid interval :* It is one of those rare productions, which occasionally illuminates the horizon of the Presbyterian church, and which, in the language of the poet, are “like angel’s visits, few and far between.” It contains much important truth, and yet it might have been much better :—It might have been expressed in a manner that would have more effectually prevented the erroneous from bestowing upon it *their* approbation. This Lecture appears to be the first of the author’s on entering anew upon his professional duties, after a “protracted” absence in Europe : From the “practical truths which the circumstances of foreign states and countries,” especially “Europe,” impress upon the mind of an “American Christian,” three are selected.

“I. One of the most obvious lessons which an American Christian is taught, by a residence in Europe, is, *the great importance of civil and religious liberty.*”

From the first head we extract but a few passages which are thought most interesting.

“The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but it constitutes in the world, a self-existent and independent society, and as such has all the rights of self-government. Among these essential rights, which the church can never resign and which can never be lawfully taken from her ; are the rights of deciding upon the terms of membership, selecting and ordaining her own officers, regulating her internal concerns, the exercise of discipline, and in short, all those rights which are inherent in a voluntary association recognised by the laws. When the church is so united to the state as to lose this individuality of character, and resign the rights of self-government, it becomes

* No insinuation is here intended against Professor Hodge ; we are rather considering the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, in her collective capacity, as an individual. We believe Professor Hodge to be generally sound in the faith, with the exception of the general principle pervading that church, that the erroneous may be retained in communion ; or in other words, that it is consistent for Christians to unite in acts of worship, and engage in schemes for the spread of the gospel, with such as hold to what they are pleased to term the foundation, although rejecting many doctrines which are believed to be essential even by the advocates of *essentials* and *non-essentials*.

a mere branch of a secular system. The head of the state is the head of the church, and exercises, as such, either directly or indirectly, the governing power. Under such a system, ministers of the gospel, are servants of the crown, (*Staatsbeamten*, as they are called in the Prussian laws,) appointed for the instruction of the people in religion, as judges and civil officers are appointed for the administration of the laws.—The church is governed by men appointed by the civil authority, it cannot choose its own officers, make its own laws, or cast out unwholesome members.

“However beautiful it may be in theory, to regard the king as the father of a great family; and as such, bound and authorized, to provide for all its wants, secular and spiritual; it never can, in the present state of the world, be carried into practice, without either making the state subservient to the church, or the church an engine of government to the state.—The former has been the result in Catholic, the latter in Protestant countries.”

“One of the most striking illustrations of the advantages of self-government in religious societies, is exhibited in the case of the Moravians in Germany. During all the desolating reign of infidelity in that country, they have retained their faith and piety. In some instances, the fervor of religion has declined among them, but the vital principle remained, and the society as a whole, is probably to this day in as favorable a state as any other equal portion of the Christian church.—Their settlements, even in their external appearance, from their order and neatness, and the elevated character of the people, are like verdant spots in the desert. And while infidelity prevailed all around them, here the gospel was still preached and loved. Another equally striking example may be cited in the Dissenters of England. I am aware that effects of this nature are seldom attributable to any one cause, but I am persuaded, that among the various causes which combine in the production of the effect now referred to, that of self-government is one of the most important. It is, at least, an important fact, that the freest churches are the purest. In those sections of Prussia, where the church has retained most of its rights, it has retained most of its purity. In the Rhine Provinces, the reformed churches, surrounded by a Catholic population, were allowed by their Catholic sovereigns, to manage their own affairs, and, since their union with Prussia, have retained more or less of their power. Here the influence of infidelity was the least felt, and the soonest thrown off: and here religion is in a more flourishing condition than in any other part of the country. The same may be said with some limitation of several cantons of Switzerland. The clergy of the canton of

Basle, are as a body, orthodox and pious; a large portion of those in the canton de Vaud, is of the same character. But with regard to Switzerland, it is difficult to speak. We are in the habit of regarding it as the land of liberty; but in ecclesiastical affairs, there is a great deal of constraint. In the Catholic cantons no Protestants, until recently, were tolerated, and in those purely Protestant, the laws were equally severe against the Catholics. The form of government in each canton, is peculiar to itself. In most, it is more or less aristocratical, and in all the Protestant cantons, I believe, the magistrates have a dominant influence in the affairs of the church. The same may be said of the free cities of Germany, as Frankfort, Bremen, and Hamburg; and therefore the decline of religion in such cities, cannot fairly be cited as examples of the decline of independent churches. In the last named city, the evil of magistrates having authority in the church, is deeply felt at the present moment; the clergy have been prohibited from preaching on the points in dispute between the orthodox and the rationalists; permission has been refused to the advocates of the truth to publish on these subjects, and in various ways, the reviving spirit of piety has been repressed and opposed."

"II. Permit me now to introduce another subject scarcely less important, as the second point I would mention, in which the mind of an American Christian would be deeply interested from a residence in Europe, viz. *the training of youth in knowledge and religion.*"

Under this head, after a detail of the plan of education, adopted in Prussia, we find the following observations, which are worthy of attention.

"Unless some plan can be adopted of introducing religious instruction into the common schools, we must consent to see a large portion of our population growing up in ignorance of the first principles of moral and religious truth. For if this matter be left entirely to parents or pastors, it can be but imperfectly attended to. There will always be a large number of the people, who belong to no denomination and come under the care of none. There is said to be 70,000 of such persons, in the single city of New-York; and we need not go many miles from our village to find individuals who hardly know that there is a God. What the result will be, of thus neglecting the moral education of the people, it requires no prophetic spirit to foretel. If public virtue be necessary to the existence of free institutions; if reason and experience teach, that religious knowledge and culture are essential to virtue; to leave the people destitute of this knowledge and this culture, is to secure the destruction of our civil liberty.—

Experience has shown, that a free government cannot exist, where the mass of the population is ignorant and immoral, and the term of its continuance amongst us is fixed to the period, when the uneducated and vicious shall constitute the majority of the people. It is enough to contrast the degradation of men who have had no moral instruction in their youth, with the character of those who have been brought up under the influence of the gospel, to have the heart filled with zeal for the extension of the blessings of religious education, even if this world were the only theatre of man's existence. But when we consider that these men, whom we thus desert to ignorance of God and his word, are forming their character for eternity, the importance of this subject is seen and felt to be infinite.

"The success which in other countries has attended the efforts to render religious education universal, should encourage us to make the attempt here. So thoroughly is the system, just detailed, carried through in Prussia, that I never met a poor boy selling matches in the streets, (and I made several experiments of the kind,) who could not answer any common question, on the historical parts of the Old and New Testaments. And one of the school commissioners of Halle, (a town containing twenty-four or twenty-six thousand inhabitants,) told me that a recent investigation led to the discovery of only fifty or sixty children who had hitherto neglected to attend the schools. Do not let us calmly sit still, therefore, and suppose that nothing can be done. If we cannot introduce religious instruction at once, into all the schools in our country, nor throughout a whole state, we may at least, endeavour to effect the object, in our own immediate neighborhoods."

We now proceed to the third and last division of the Lecture, which we had more directly in view, and to which our introductory remarks more particularly allude, which we shall copy entire. The position endeavoured to be established, viz. "*the intimate connection between speculative opinion and moral character*," is one of vital importance. If this truth should be kept steadily in view, we cannot suppose it to be hardly possible for the Christian to let go his hold upon the doctrines of the gospel. A neglect to give this sentiment its due weight, is doubtless the cause of many of the evils which afflict the church of God,—which has had an extensive influence in bringing about the awful contempt of religion, that characterizes so great a proportion of our population, and which has led so many of the professing people of God to welcome to their fellowship those who are enemies to the gospel, and mere perverters of God's holy word. And we may be permitted to ask Professor Hodge, and every other man who believes *moral character* and *speculative opinion* to be inseparably connected, how he can cordially invite those to set with him at the communion table, whom, as an office bearer in the church of God, he would not in the *first instance* admit to her fellowship, and who re-

jeet and repudiate, with all that energy of mind the God of providence has given them, the doctrines of "the sovereignty of God, the helplessness and dependence of man, his depravity and solemn responsibility?"—doctrines which he, in this Lecture, makes essential to the existence of evangelical religion. The Lecture itself furnishes a satisfactory answer. For while we can bestow an unqualified approbation upon the position laid down in his third head, we can at the same time discover in his manner of establishing the position, that indefinite kind of reasoning, (though not in so great a degree as is discoverable in most of the writings of the General Assembly's ministers,) that has well nigh stript the gospel of all its distinctive and glorious peculiarities, which give it such an infinite superiority over all other religions. Take, as a specimen of our meaning, the following sentence:—"It is an important truth, that no *serious* religious error can exist, without a corresponding perversion or destruction of religious feelings." Had the writer struck out the word "*serious*," the sentence would have been scriptural, and he would have prevented the erroneous from quoting him with approbation. The word *serious* implies that there may be religious errors which are not *serious*. A principle this, the practical effects of which are most lamentable. Its direct tendency is to make men careless in forming their religious principles, and in maintaining them when formed. Hence the very vitals of Christianity are esteemed *non-essential* by multitudes whom the Professor, on the principles of his public profession, must acknowledge as brethren. On his own principle, then, that *moral character* and *speculative opinion*, are inseparable, what becomes of the "religious feelings" of the multitudes in the General Assembly, who deny "the Sovereignty of God, the helplessness and dependence of man, and his depravity and solemn responsibility?" Is there not "a corresponding perversion or destruction of religious feelings" in these cases? And these are the very men continually prating about *non-essentials*, and to which the Professor gives encouragement, by the sentence quoted. What should we think of the husbandman who had toiled long and patiently to plant his garden with the choicest vines,* and to wall it round in a manner that would effectually exclude the beasts of the field, and yet leave the door of entrance open? Should we not pronounce the man mad. And those who act on the principle of *non-essentials*, are not more rational. We admit the *relative* importance of doctrines: So is the wall round the garden more important than the gate; but with the gate open it becomes useless. Some truths of revelation are more sublime, and display in a more striking manner, than others, the glorious perfections of Jehovah and the condition of sinful man; yet, *all* are but one grand whole, and wo to him that takes any thing from it or adds any thing to it. "For till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." See also Rev. xxii. 18, 19. Therefore, it is obvious to all who do not willfully shut their eyes against the light, that "no religious error can exist, without a corresponding perversion, or destruction of religious feelings" or principles.

The leading idea which runs through this Lecture, "*that heterodoxy is the*

* The church "is a garden enclosed," abounding with "pleasant fruits," Song iv. Read from the 12th to the 16th verses, inclusive.

consequence rather than the cause of the loss of piety," deserves notice. This is a splendid and plausible error ; therefore, a dangerous one. And like the doctrine of non-essentials, it has been acted upon till the church has become filled with the erroneous and the worldly minded. On this principle, persons have been admitted to sealing ordinances because they *felt* pious ; and have either been blown away by the first wind of temptation, or have been suffered to remain in the bosom of the church as thorns to chastise the unfaithfulness of those that admitted them. And history as well as experience testifies how often such persons have literally made havoc of the church, in violation of their solemn covenant engagements. While it is admitted that impiety is the reason why men reject truth, yet *heterodoxy* must be considered as a cause of impiety. It was listening to a false teacher, and believing his doctrine that introduced impiety into our world. And who can deny that Adam's loss of piety was caused by heterodoxy ? It is through, or by the instrumentality of the truth, that men are saved from condemnation. On this point the scriptures are clear and explicit :—"Of his own will *begat* he us with the word of truth." James i. 18. "Being *born again* not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." "Sanctify them through thy *truth*, thy word is truth." "Through the sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*," &c. But says the Lecture, adopting the language of scripture—"Keep your hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issue of life." True ; but the truth must first be embraced, in the love of it, before the heart can be kept. Therefore, it is better to say that orthodoxy and piety are inseparably connected, like faith and repentance, and that there can no more be piety without orthodoxy, than there can be repentance without faith. But if there must be a distinction in the order of time, then it is not true, that "heterodoxy is the consequence rather than the cause of the loss of piety ;" but the reverse is true. "The natural expression of the feelings of true piety, is the doctrines of the Bible. As long as these feelings are retained, these doctrines will be retained." We are at a loss to affix any definite meaning to the term "feelings," so frequently used in the Lecture ; but suppose that a *principle of grace* is intended. If so, it leads us to something like Quakerism : But it is not believed that the Professor would maintain that religious feelings are attainable without the instrumentality of the word ; and yet this must be the case if these religious feelings are the cause of orthodoxy. Therefore, we are here again compelled to reverse the order, and say, that so long as the doctrines of the Bible are retained, so long will these "religious feelings be retained." To say that "a man's real opinions are the expression of his character," does not alter the case, because a man's real opinions *form* his character, so far as they have any practical influence ; and if they have no practical influence it is not of much consequence what they are. And if they form his character, of course they must be the *cause* rather than the consequence of it. Thus we see that this is strange doctrine to be inculcated by a Professor in the Presbyterian church : How can religious feelings exist at all, without at least a proportionate knowledge of the truth. They cannot, any more than a man can see without eyes, or walk without legs. It is true that the carnal heart hates the light, and it "is the condemnation of the world that light has come into it, and that men love darkness rather than light, be-

cause their deeds are evil." But how came man into this condition? By *changing the truth of God into a lie*. Romans i. 25. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." v. 28. While it is true that there can be no *right* understanding of the scriptures without regeneration, it is also true that regeneration is ordinarily effected by the instrumentality of the word. Therefore, it is not true that "a man's religious opinions are the result and expression of his religious feelings," but the reverse is true; because these "feelings" are formed by, and dependent upon, his opinions.

Thus we have endeavoured briefly to point out what appears to us a radical error running throughout the Lecture, even while the author is advocating an orthodox position. It is the production of one of the most orthodox ministers of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church; and the errors inculcated in it, being brought forward in support of a sound principle, are not readily perceived, and we had perused the Lecture the second time before we knew well what to make of it. It furnishes a specimen of the highest degree of orthodoxy in the General Assembly; and it satisfies us that they who are looking for reform in that church will be disappointed: for it is an evidence that her most orthodox ministers, instead of taking a stand against the erroneous, are publicly teaching the very essence and foundation principles of the numerous errors which have broken down her discipline and tarnished her glory. We now submit the third head of the Lecture, on which we have been commenting, to our readers, and leave it for them to decide whether our observations are well founded or not.

III. A third great truth which an observation of the state of European churches, is adapted to impress upon the mind, is, *the intimate connexion between speculative opinion, and moral character.*

There is no sentiment more frequently advanced, than that a man's opinions have little to do with his moral character, and yet there is none more fundamentally erroneous. The fact is, that opinions on moral and religious subjects depend mainly on the state of the moral and religious feelings. Mere argument can no more produce the intimate persuasion of moral truth, than it can of beauty. As it depends on our refinement of taste, what things to us are beautiful, so it depends upon our religious feelings, what doctrines for us are true.—A man's real opinions, are the expression of his character.—They are the forms in which his inward feelings embody themselves, and become visible. The secret conviction of this truth, is the reason, that the ascription of obnoxious opinions, is always regarded as an aspersion on character. Why is the denial of God's existence regarded with horror, by all classes of men, but because it presupposes a heart dead to all the manifestations of his glory in creation, in our own nature, and in his word? The denial of God's justice is a proof of insensibility to sin; the rejection of Jesus Christ, of blindness

to his moral loveliness. It is therefore, an important truth, that no serious religious error can exist, without a corresponding perversion or destruction of religious feelings.

To prevent misapprehension, it may be proper to remark that while it is asserted, that if a man's feelings be in a proper state, he will embrace and believe the truth as soon as it is presented; it is freely admitted, that a man's opinions may be correct, and yet his moral character corrupt. But in this case, these opinions are merely nominal, they form no part of the intimate persuasion of his soul, and hence, are no expression of his character,

In support of the point we are considering, we might refer to the different systems of religion, throughout the world, and observe their correspondence with the peculiar character of the people who embrace them. The contemplative and effeminate systems of Eastern Asia; the mixture of loftiness and sensuality in the religion of Mohammed; the refinement, licentiousness and general disregard of principle in the theology of the Greeks; the more rigid features of the religion of the early Romans; or the sanguinary creed of the war-like nations of Northern Europe. Or we might refer to the characteristic traits of the various sects in christendom, and observe how the leading features of each are expressed in their peculiar opinions. Those in whom the imagination predominates, who have liveliness without depth of religious feeling and but little reflection, have a religion of pomp and splendid forms, of fasts and festivals and of easy means of satisfying the conscience. All those in whose systems the sovereignty of God, the helplessness and dependence of man, his depravity and solemn responsibility occupy the leading parts; have been distinguished for severity, strictness, separation from the world, depth of feeling and fixedness of purpose: a strong determined character, whose tendency is to make the severer, prevail over the milder features of religion. The Armenian system is the natural expression, of feelings less strongly marked, of less reverence for God, less humiliating views of man, and in general of less prominence and depth of religious character. Those who have no inward necessity for the doctrines of the gospel, no apprehension of God's holiness, no fear of his justice, no adequate sense of sin, need no atoning Saviour, and no sanctifying Spirit, and thus easily satisfy themselves with the doctrines of natural religion. Another proof of this point is, that whenever a change occurs in the religious opinions of a community, it is always preceded by a change in their religious feelings. The natural expression of the feelings of true piety, is the doctrines of the Bible. As long as these feelings are retained, these doctrines will be retained; but

should they be lost, the doctrines are either held for form sake or rejected, according to circumstances; and if the feelings be again called into life, the doctrines return as a matter of course. The proof of this remark must be sought in ecclesiastical history. Its truth can only be observed, however, where there is freedom of opinion; where the mind is left to assume its natural form, and adopt opinions, most congenial with its state. When every thing is fixed and immoveable, as in the Catholic church, there will, of course, be little change visible, whatever may actually take place beneath the unvarying surface. But in Protestant countries we see abundant evidence of the correctness of the remark. In Scotland, the doctrines of the church are retained only by those who retain the spirit of the framers of their confession. In Geneva the system of Calvin did not survive the spirit of its author. The same may be said of France, and all parts of Germany. In this latter country the truth of our remark is more observable, because more violent changes have there occurred than in any other portion of Christendom.

After the struggle against infidelity had been sustained in England, it passed over into France and thence into Germany. Here it achieved its greatest triumph. Christianity had well nigh ceased to be even the nominal religion of the land—men began to talk of the introduction of a new Bible—of the abolition of the clergy—and of the very form of the church. To this remarkable event, this distressing fall of so large and important a part of Protestant Christendom, the eyes of all interested in religion have been naturally turned, and a general demand made, what could have been the cause of so general and lamentable a defection. Much has been written on this subject, and a thousand causes assigned, while the most obvious has been the least regarded. The simple fact is, that vital religion had been long declining. There seem to be certain cycles, through which almost every church, is more or less regularly passing. During one age, there are many revivals of religion, and a general prevalence of evangelical spirit and exertion; to this succeeds a period of coldness and declension; and to this, either a period of revival or of open departure from the faith. In Germany, at the period of the reformation, there was a general revival of religion; to this succeeded a period of cold orthodoxy brought about principally by perpetual controversy on unimportant subjects. This long period, was but partially interrupted by the revival under Franke and Spener. After which, things relapsed into their former course. The preaching of the gospel was so tiresome and controversial that it could produce little effect upon the people. Practical religion was no necessary requisite for ad-

mission into the ministry ; and the clergy soon became as little distinguished for piety, as any other class of men. This being the case, their holding or rejecting the doctrines of the gospel, was a mere matter of circumstance. As long as their interest, or standing depended upon their nominal faith, they retained it ; but as soon as fashion and interest were on the side of rejecting it, they rejected it. Under Frederick the Great, infidelity became the fashion ; no opprobrium was attached even to the clergy, declaring themselves superior to the opinions and prejudices of darker ages. They had lost their hold on the doctrines of the gospel and stood ready to be carried away by the first blast that blew.

The fact, that at this juncture, the philologists, Heyne and Wolf, gave a new spring to historical criticism, and commenced distinguishing on critical grounds, the genuine from the spurious parts of the ancient classics ; led Semler and his school to follow the same course with regard to the Bible.— And as they had no inward necessity for believing, their fancying that they discovered critical grounds for the rejection of this or that book of scripture, or the whole, they renounced their faith in the word of God. New systems of philosophy now making their appearance, moulding religion into a hundred different shapes, completed the effect, of turning the already really unbelieving clergy and others, into the ranks of open infidelity. It was not until severe national and private afflictions began to turn the minds of all classes of men towards God, and awaken feelings which found no appropriate objects in the barren systems of philosophical religion, that men began to return to the doctrines of the Bible. And just in proportion as this revival of religion has advanced, has been the return to orthodoxy. Thus as irreligion preceded infidelity, the revival of religion has preceded a return to soundness of faith. It is this vital connection between piety and truth, that is the great and solemn lesson, taught by the past and present state of the German churches.

This correspondence between opinion and character, is strikingly observable in the various religious parties in that section of the church. The leading parties, are the Orthodox, the Rationalists, and the Pantheists. Wherever you find vital piety, that is, penitence, and a devotional spirit, there you find, the doctrines of the fall, of depravity, of regeneration, of atonement, and the Deity of Jesus Christ. I never saw nor heard of a single individual who exhibited a spirit of piety who rejected any one of these doctrines. There are many who have great reverence for Jesus Christ and regard for the scriptures, but having no experience of the power of the gospel, they have no clear views nor firm conviction of its doc-

trines; they are vacillating on the borders of two classes in opinion, exactly as they are in feeling.

The Rationalists as a body, are precisely like common men of the world. In general, orderly in their lives, but without the least semblance of experimental piety. They regard it as mysticism, exaggeration, enthusiasm, or hypocrisy. Some few, from the natural turn of their minds, have something of the poetry and sentimentality of religion, but nothing of vital godliness. In Pantheism there is room and expression for a variety of character. Some men of elevated intellects, discourse much, of the sublimity and grandeur of the infinite, and bow with a sort of adoration, before the living universe. But as this infinite is not a person, is neither moral nor intelligent, this system, while it inflates the imagination, gives no object for the moral feelings: and hence, when men who have much of these feelings fall into its snares, they are in torment until they find deliverance. Others of this class, from the idea, that the all pervading principle, is most completely developed in intelligent beings, and most of all, in those who have come to a consciousness of their identity with this principle, are filled with the most amazing pride; they are God in the highest state of his existence. These are self-idolaters.—Others again, of a different cast, love to feel themselves a part of an illimitable whole, which moves on and must move on, through its vast cycles, without their co-operation or responsibility, and look forward with complacency, to going out, like a spark in the ocean, unnoticed and unremembered in the infinitude of being.

Now, brethren, if these things be so, if a man's religious opinions are the result and expression of his religious feelings, if heterodoxy be the consequence rather than the cause of the loss of piety, then "keep your hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life." Remember that it is only in God's light that you can see light. That holiness is essential to correct knowledge of divine things, and the great security from error. And as you see, that when men lose the life of religion, they can believe the most monstrous doctrines and glory in them; and that when the clergy once fall into such errors, generations perish before the slow course of reviving piety brings back the truth; "what manner of men ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Not only then for your own sake, but for the sake of your children, and your children's children, forsake not your God; who is our God, because he was the God of our fathers. The fate of future ages, rests with every present generation.

Again, beware of any course of life or study, which has a tendency to harden your hearts, and deaden the delicate sen-

sibility of the soul to moral truth and beauty. There are two ways in which this may be done, a course of sin, and indulgence in metaphysical speculations on divine things. The reason, why such speculations produce this effect, is, that the views of truth thus taken are not of its moral nature, and of course produce no moral feeling, but the reverse. Let a man, when contemplating the grandeur of alpine scenery, begin to examine the structure of the mountains, and study their geological character; what becomes of his emotions of sublimity? Thus also religious truth, viewed in the general, produces devotion; metaphysically analyzed it destroys it. Where is our reverence and awe of God, while prying into his essence or scrutinizing his attributes? Where are our feelings of penitence, when disputing on the origin of evil? our sense of responsibility when discussing free-will and dependence?—That it may be necessary to attend to these subjects, and get as far as possible, definite ideas respecting them, no one will deny; but when our habitual views of truth, are of this nature, there is an end of all feeling on the subject. There is another remark, which may here be made. When a man prefers examining the geological structure of a mountainous region, to the contemplation of its grandeur; he only prefers the acquisition of knowledge to the enjoyment of an elevating emotion; but as the objects of his examination are external, and have no connection with the emotions of his mind, his insensibility is no obstacle to his progress. But with regard to moral subjects the case is far different; the feelings destroyed by metaphysical investigation, are the very objects to be investigated, for their moral quality is their essence. If this be weakened or destroyed, there is nothing left; and a man in this state is no more qualified to speak on these subjects, than the deaf to discourse on music. This is the reason that metaphysicians so often advance doctrines, which the whole world know to be false, because they contradict the strongest moral feelings of the soul. Will the mass of pious people ever be brought to believe, that God is the author of sin? that man is not free, and consequently not accountable? that sin is not a moral evil, but mere imperfect development? or the still more horrible opinion, that God himself, is merely the blind instinctive principle, which animates and constitutes the universe, of which neither moral nor intellectual qualities can be predicated? Yet metaphysicians teach all these doctrines. Look around you, brethren, and see if these things be not so. As far as my observation extends, it is the uniform tendency of such speculations to deaden the moral sensibility of the soul. Beware then of unhallowed speculations on sacred subjects. Bring all your doctrines to the test of

God's word and of holiness. Go with your new opinions to the aged children of God, who have spent years in close communion with the Father of lights. Propose to them your novel doctrines, should they shock their feelings, depend upon it, they are false and dangerous. The approbation of an experienced Christian of any purely religious opinion, is worth more, than that of any merely learned theologian upon earth.

Finally, lean not to your own understanding. If there be any declaration of the Bible, confirmed by the history of the church, and especially by the recent history of European churches, it is that "he that leaneth to his own understanding is a fool." When men forsake the word of God, and profess to be wise above that which is written, they inevitably and universally lose themselves in vain speculations. Look at the state of things, when every man is following the light of his own reason. Each boasts that he alone has the truth, and yet each is often a miracle of folly to every man but himself.*—True, such men are often men of great intellect; but can mere intellect perceive moral truth? Can man by wisdom find out God? can he find out the Almighty unto perfection? No man knoweth the father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him. Submit yourselves, therefore, to the teaching of him, in whom "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It is only when thus taught, that you will be able to teach others also.

One word more—keep as you would your hold on heaven your reverence for Jesus Christ. Reverence for the Redeemer of sinners, is the very last feeling which deserts a falling Christian, or a sinking church. When all other evidence, and all other arguments for the Bible had lost their force, this solitary feeling has held up the soul from sinking into infidelity and thence into perdition. When this is lost, all is lost. The soul that is insensible to the glory of the Son of God, is "as a tree twice dead and plucked up by the roots."

FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.

EXTRACTS.

At present, it is said, there are many Protestants, even among the Italians, near Leghorn; though the priests endeavour to persuade them that the Protestants are not Christians. The Bible is carefully kept from them, nor can a copy be procured under twenty guineas: it is a great work, consisting of twenty volumes, Latin and Italian; and is therefore, from its

* *Nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum.*
—CICERO.

price alone, a sealed book, even to many of the priests themselves. What a blessing might attend the labours of a few missionaries with the Bible in their hands: the Hindoos are scarcely in more need of them.

The priests form no small part of the population at Pisa, as in every other town in Italy. At an ordination which a friend of mine witnessed, he said there were thirty two little boys, some of whom did not appear to have reached their tenth year, who received the first and second order of priesthood, and thirty more who received the third. These boys wear white surplices trimmed with lace or muslin, and clerical cocked hats. It is both absurd and melancholy to see such little creatures devoted to they know not what.—*Three years in Italy.*

[It is curious to observe the coincidence between the practice here referred to, and the corruption with which Calvin upbraids the Papacy, Instit. b. iv. ch. v.—“But the greatest absurdity of all is, that even boys, scarcely ten years of age, have, by the permission of the Pope, been made bishops.”]

Wednesday I went to St. Peters to hear the *Miserere*, which was fine beyond my expectation. We sat opposite to the altar, before which thirteen candles burnt bright for a time: by degrees they were all extinguished but one, which was placed burning behind the altar, to represent the undying faith of the Virgin, whilst that of the twelve Apostles entirely failed.

This evening we saw a curious ceremony at the church of the pilgrims; princesses and ladies of the first consequence, washing the feet of female pilgrims, and afterwards attending them at supper. For the first, warm water was brought in large tubs or buckets: the ladies, dressed in black, tucked up their gowns, and girded themselves with napkins; after which, they pulled off the stockings of the poor women, and having placed their feet in the tubs, washed and rubbed them carefully, and then wiped them with the towels.

When this was over, we were ushered into a grand sala, where long tables were laid out for supper. In a few minutes a number of women entered, dressed as pilgrims, with staves in their hands, and bundles girt to their backs, and arranged themselves, standing round the table. It occurred to me, that this ceremony is a commemoration of the passover which the Israelites ate hastily before their sudden departure from Egypt. The same ladies who had been employed in washing the feet, served the pilgrims at table, handing round macaroni, vegetables, and such other provisions as Lent permitted. Between the tables, at a convenient distance, a long form was filled with spectators, many of whom were descanting on the meri-

torious deeds of the princesses. A little Italian girl, who sat next me, observed that those ladies would obtain many indulgences; (in other words, they were earning a pardon for past offences.) The ladies of the Bonaparte family, particularly distinguished themselves in their observance of these ceremonies.

Thursday—Both to-day and yesterday, during the interval when the music ceased, there was a noise like the clashing of swords, to represent the Jews coming with swords and staves to take our blessed Lord. I saw the poor feeble Pope carried to the place where he washed the feet of thirteen pilgrims.—The Pope prefaced this operation by reading a portion of scripture in Latin, in a clear and audible voice. I believe it was the narrative of our Lord washing the feet of his disciples, to set them an example of humility. A kneeling cardinal presented to the Pope a silver basin, in which he dipped the towel, and slightly rubbed one foot of each pilgrim. After having witnessed this for a few minutes, we all moved to the supper room, where the Pope was to attend the same pilgrims at table. The Pope followed, advanced to the table, and served them with macaroni, soup, vegetables, sweet-meats, &c. and goblets of wine in abundance; all of which he first received from a cardinal on his knees. Every thing which is laid on the table becomes the property of the pilgrims—the silver goblets, spoons, knives, forks, plates, napkins, &c. and the residue of the provisions. It was well for the poor Pope, this busy day, that he could command other people to carry him about, for his own strength would most certainly have failed; as it was, he looked nearly exhausted.—*Ibid.*

If we consider David, in the great variety of his fine qualifications;—the ornaments of his person, and the far more illustrious endowments of his mind;—the surprising revolutions in his fortune; sometimes reduced to the lowest ebb of adversity; sometimes riding upon the highest tide of prosperity;—his singular dexterity in extricating himself from difficulties, and peculiar felicity in accomodating himself to all circumstances;—the prizes he won, as a youthful champion;—and the victories he gained, as an experienced general;—his masterly hand upon the harp, and his inimitable talent for poetry;—the admirable regulations of his royal government, and the incomparable usefulness of his public writings;—the depth of his repentance, and the height of his devotion;—the vigour of his faith in the divine promises, and the ardour of his love to the divine Majesty;—if we consider these, with several other marks of honour and grace, which ennoble the history of his life; we shall see such an *assemblage* of shining quali-

ties, as perhaps were never united in any other merely human character. This observation is offered to the public, in order to convince a *polite* reader, that the love of the scriptures, and the exercise of devotion, are by no means the peculiarities of a *vulgar* mind.—*Theron and Aspasio, Dialogue 1. note.*

David, to set forth the barbarous assiduity of his persecutors, says,—“They wander up and down.” They pry into every corner; they search the city, and examine the country; not (*lachal*) *for meet*, which, in this connection, is a sense quite foreign to the subject, and very jejune indeed, but ‘to devour;’ to devour me, the destined victim of their rage; and if they ‘are not satisfied,’ if they cannot compass their design by night, (*uilinu*) ‘they will grudge.’ No; but ‘they will continue all night,’ in the prosecution of their purpose. Neither cold nor darkness can retard them; neither hardships nor dangers can divert them; but their attempts are as indefatigable, as their malice is implacable.—*Ibid. Dialogue 13, note.*

ACTUAL CAREER OF AN INFIDEL.

There is power in argument to convince the judgment in degree, but where the heart is in love with sin, an inventive imagination will summon all its force to confront the soundest logic. But *facts*, STUBBORN FACTS, cannot be denied. The following from the New-York Gazette, are no doubt the relations of incontrovertible truth, which can be confirmed by living testimony from persons of veracity, now living in the city of New-York. We place these facts in contradiction of all the philosophy, which may be gathered from “the writings of all the skeptics that have flourished” and been destroyed, “from Cain,” the first Infidel, “down to the days of our modern philosopher in petticoats,”—to whom multitudes of unread theorists are submitting both judgment and conscience, proud to be her disciples.—*Chris. Watch.*

“Of late, my friend Lang, a great deal has been said about Miss Wright and her Temple of Reason. I think the plain, simple, but true history of myself and William, affords as good a practical comment on the effects of Infidel principles, as any thing I have met with. If you think it worth publishing, it is at your service. In a short time it will be forty winters since I first landed in New-York; I was then in my twentieth year, without a face that I knew, or a friend to counsel or direct.—On the first Sabbath morning after we landed, three young men of our passengers called and inquired where I was going to-day. I said, to church; they answered, we have been near ten weeks confined to the ship, let us now walk out and

see the country; our health requires exercise, and we can go to church another day. I said, as long as I can remember I had gone to church with my father every Sabbath of my life, and when we parted, his last words were, "*Remember the Sabbath day.*" They went to the country; I went to church; they spent a few shillings of their wages; I put two one penny corporation bills in the plate. Some of them were good mechanics, and got from \$8 to \$10 per week; my branch was poor, and it was only by close application I earned \$5 per week. They continued going in the country, found loose company, spent most of their week's wages, came home half drunk, sometimes caught by a thunder storm, spoiled their fine clothes and hats; rose late on Monday morning, bones and head aching, and could work but little all that day. I went to church, saved my wages, rose early on Monday morning, my bones rested, my head sound, and started on the labours of the week with a light heart and quiet conscience.—At the end of the year, they could show fine clothes and powdered heads on Sunday; but I could show \$100 piled in the corner of my chest. They have all been gone long ago; having lived fast, they died early; while I, as one consequence of regular living, have not been confined by sickness for one day in all that period. Now Mr. Deists and Mrs. Deists, you who purpose to reform the world by destroying the Bible and abolishing the Sabbath, I would ask you, who lived the most comfortable life, they or I? who were the most useful members of society? They died and left their wives and children beggars. If I die to-night, my family have the tools and hands to make themselves independent of the world.*

About three months after I landed, there came from England into the shop where I wrought, a man by the name of William; he had a fine little woman, for a wife, and one or two young children. He was an excellent mechanic, and the first, I believe, who manufactured coach springs in New-York; he was, by religious profession, a Baptist, and went to the church in Gold-street. Dr. Foster, I believe, was then the pastor. He continued a consistent professor, attended church regularly with his wife and children. But, William was a warm politician; a politician as red hot as the iron he hammered. He was soon found out by the radicals of that day. About this time there came to this city a man by the name of Palmer, who was either born blind or had lost his sight by disease. This blind leader of the blind used to lecture on

* One of the young men of whom I speak, was a baker; in a fit of intemperance, while working dough, in the trough, alone, he lost his balance, tumbled in with his head buried in dough, and in this situation he was found dead. This fact is known to scores of his countrymen now in this city.—*N. Y. Obs.*

Deism, in what was then called the Assembly Room, in William-street. William was led by some of his new associates into this dungeon of despair, and drank deep into their dark and cheerless doctrine. In a short time he came out a flaming Deist, and instead of going with his wife and children to church, he led them to Long Island, or the fields in Jersey, or he went by himself, to a low tavern, and harrangued on Tom Paine's Age of Reason, to any set of blockheads who would hear him. His children, as they grew up, being left to wander as they pleased, soon associated with bad company, and turned out worse than good-for-nothing. He had commenced business for himself, and for some time was in a very thriving way.—But now, every thing was forgot in his zeal for propagating his new principles. You might find him in every street and corner, pouring out his new light; and so vulgar and brutish was the language in which he blasphemed every thing which society in general holds sacred, that moderate men of any principle got disgusted—shunned his company and shop; and his worldly circumstances began to fall into decay. As old shopmates, he and I have ever been, and now are, on the most friendly terms when we meet; and from the beginning have I expostulated and warned him of the ruin he was bringing on himself and family in this world, laying the next aside. Though he could not deny the truth of what I said, yet he seemed like one who had gone so far, that he was ashamed to recede.

One morning about 10 o'clock, a few weeks ago, he called on me and asked for something to buy his breakfast, as he had not tasted any thing that day. I looked on him with sorrow almost to crying—says I, William, has it really come to this with you? He said he had not a cent—a friend, or child, to help him, in the world. I asked for his sons and daughters, by name—they had all gone to ruin, or were dead. The few old friends of the William-street *Illuminati*, now that he was poor, knew him not. I gave him a small sum, and told him to call on me in his extremity. Says I, William, there are my sons and daughters; they are an honour to their parents, being all useful members of society. Your children and mine were brought up neighbors to one another—what should make them to differ?—He was silent. Says I, I told you 34 years ago, your mad principles would beggar yourself, and ruin your family. While you carried your children to the fields, or left them to wander in the road to destruction; I carried mine to the church, where they were not exposed to bad company; and now they walk in the ways of wisdom, which are pleasantness and peace. I added, you must now be convinced that religion is the best thing for this world; and in the next, they

who profess it will be as well off as you. But, if the Bible is true, you may say with the miser, I was starved in this world, and damned in that which is to come. He confessed I had the best of the argument, and said he might have been a rich man if he had stuck to the principles he brought with him from England. He said he thought of going into the alms-house—it was a good last-retreat; and for this, says William, I have to thank Christianity: for, where the Bible is not known, they have neither alms-house nor hospital. I have only to add, that this story is no fiction, nor combination of characters that may have existed; but it is literally true.—My friend William now lives, (you know him)—he is a man of truth, (though a deist,) and will vouch for what I have said, were he asked. If any one doubts, you may give them my name. I will point them to some of the men, still alive, of whom I speak.

Yours,
CARDUS.

Miscellaneous.

PROFESSOR STUART'S LETTER.

ANDOVER, DEC. 22, 1829.

To the Suffolk Committee in Boston, appointed to enquire into the nature, principles and tendency, of Free Masonry.
GENTLEMEN.

In answer to your inquiries, respecting any traces of the history of Free Masonry, in ancient times, I reply, that it has not been my lot to find any thing of this nature in any book that I have ever perused, either in any of the Asiatic or European languages. I take it to be a point conceded by all literary men, that no such traces exist, in any ancient record whatever.

The pretence that Free Masonry was known in the time of Solomon, is refuted by the internal evidence which Masonic books themselves contain. For example, they tell us that Hiram Abiff, the Grand Master Mason, was killed by Jubela, Jubelo and Jubelum. It happens, unfortunately, however, that these names are formed, (and that by no very *skilful master*,) from the Latin language, and not from the Hebrew, to which they bear not the slightest resemblance. All Hebrew names are significant and have a Hebrew shape; and it requires but a moderate share of skill, to detect gross imposture in this pretended history of Hiram Abiff.

The same is manifestly the case, in regard to a large class of names, which are given out by Masonic books as very ancient; e. g. Buh, Giblinites, Toulumith, Lisha, Jaobert, Tito, Harrodion, Juha, (Animani, which the books say means, *I am that I am*,) Jubilum, Akirop, Sidach, Solo, and many others.

If the meaning of Masonic books be, what it seems to be, that these have come down from the days and the language of Solomon, it is gross imposture. These names would for the most part, be as good Hebrew, as *Abracadabra* is English.

If what the books state, also, about the use of such names as Jah, Jevah, Jovah, Shaddai, Adonai, be true, (names of the adorable Godhead, in the Hebrew language, and introduced it would seem, by some Masons who had a smattering of the Hebrew language;) if it be true that these names are used in the connection and manner in which the books of Masons declare them to be, then it is certain that the name of God is profanely used. And what can I say of the Animani, which is pretended to mean, *I am that I am*? I confess, that I cannot help shuddering at the manner in which this is stated to be used, in books published by members of the Masonic fraternity. Whether the accounts, however, from which I take this, are true, is of course more than I am able to vouch for. It is only on the supposition that they are so, that my remarks can have any bearing on the subject of Masonry.

If these accounts are true, then it is time that every man in our community should know it. That any class of men among us should be encouraged to expect protection in all cases, "murder and treason not excepted," is what institutions like ours can never sanction; and the eyes of all should be opened wide in relation to this matter.

If these accounts are not true, the Masons owe it to themselves, and to the world, to vindicate themselves from such charges. Especially is this the case, inasmuch as these charges are made by men of good standing, of unimpeachable integrity and veracity, and who have a *personal* acquaintance with all the secrets of Masonry. For my part, I shall be exceedingly glad to see these charges refuted; as it would greatly relieve my mind in regard to many estimable men, belonging to the Masonic order. But I see no way to get rid of the force of the testimony in question, until a counter statement is made, which is worthy of credibility.

For a long time, I neither knew nor cared much about this subject. But recent attention to it, has filled me with astonishment; and as to some things contained in it, with horror. The trifling with oaths, and with the awful names of the ever blessed God, is a feature which I cannot contemplate but with deep distress.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your friend and Ob't. Serv't.

MOSES STUART.

SABBATH MAILS,—*The true state of the case.*—"Throw ever so many disguises around the subject, the plain fact will still appear, that all the petitioners ask of Congress is, that, having made a law which authorizes a violation

of the Sabbath, while claiming they have no right to legislate on this subject, they would undo what they ought not to have done, and then let the subject alone. It is claimed, and the claim is echoed from city to city, and from village to village, that if Congress were to legislate respecting the transportation of the mail on the Sabbath, it would be to connect religion and politics—Church and State. Well, let it be so. It follows, then, that when they passed the present law, they united Church and State—and those who defend the present law, defend them in thus uniting Church and State; while the petitioners, being opposed to such a union, ask of Congress to repeal the law creating it, and henceforth to let Church and State be forever separate.”—*Chr. Mirror*.

[From the Christian Watchman.]

Five reasons why Popery is likely to flourish in this country.

1. Popery has an imposing influence in its external administration. Men are much excited by what is visible and tangible. The images of the Cross, and the horrific pictures of a crucified Saviour, with other idolatrous representations, which forcibly strike the senses, are calculated to gain the notice of many, and to foster a blind and senseless devotion. Whilst the Bible reveals to us an omniscient and omnipresent God and Saviour, the inventions of the heathen and of wicked men in all ages, have been exerted to represent an absent God. The real Christian worships a present Jehovah in spirit and in truth; but idolatry is calculated to destroy the conviction of His presence, who ‘fillet all in all.’

2. The abundant wealth and resources of the church of Rome, enable her agents to make great exertions in the spread of her doctrines. The fascinations of riches are immense. And when men can gratify their lust of gold at the same time that they are flattering themselves with the vain hope of safety and salvation in a false religion, they will eagerly catch at a temptation so alluring, and shut their eyes against the sight of the most vile abominations and follies, which a superstitious theology may have consecrated.

3. The Catholics are commencing a very superior plan of education; in some respects, more thorough than is generally prevalent in our United States. Their system of religion is artfully interwoven with this education, so that both are inwrought with all the prejudices of their students. The errors which may be thus received are known by experience to be the most inveterate, the hardest to be eradicated. A host of partizans thus instructed, are training for the defence of a false and dangerous theology.

4. The arts practised by some of the priests of this religion are exceedingly dangerous. Although the foundation of their leading doctrines is utterly corrupt, yet they will sophistically evade objections in a manner which many, not accustomed to argumentative discussions, are unable to meet and satisfactorily answer. Their penances and mortifications, for instance, which are taught to be meritorious, may be said to obtain this character of desert from the atonement of Christ. The fact that this theory would make justification to be by works, may not be apprehended by some.

5. But one great reason why popery may prevail, even in our happy country, is, that men are not willing to trust themselves in forming their religious opinions. If such a thing be possible, which Popery teaches them is possible, they prefer to have others think for them. This scheme presents them with an infallible church, and a priesthood to solve every difficulty. In so important an affair as the salvation of the soul, how soothing is the idea, if one can believe it, of being perfectly safe in the bosom of an infallible church: of a church which can pardon all sin, and by its rites and ceremonies prepare us for endless blessedness.

LIBERIA.—According to a letter of the 18th September, quoted in the Philadelphia Chronicle of the 4th inst. direct intelligence has been received. Out of the number of emigrants, per ship Harriet, from Norfolk, which went out last spring, thirty had died. Upon the subject of the slave trade, the letter has this fearful statement:—

The slave trade is still carried on with activity ; and when passing the Galenas I saw six or eight slavers waiting a cargo. Even at the river whence I at present write, there are some for a similar purpose. The greater part of these are Baltimore built vessels under Spanish colors. On this subject, there appears to be a great degree of ignorance, in the United States ; for the belief of many is, that a total suppression exists here,—when the truth is, it is carried on as violently as ever. On this subject, the hearts of thousands are feelingly alive : and I can but add my wish for the early arrival of that day, when every man in christendom will conceive it wrong and unjust.

DISTRESS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE IN ENGLAND.

EMIGRATION.

[From the Manchester (England) Times of Sept. 26.]

We had an occasion, the other day, to witness a scene which strikingly proved the existence of the distress which is now experienced by the working classes. Saturday last, an advertisement appeared in our paper, stating that the captain of an American vessel would be at an inn in Deansgate, to contract with such persons as were disposed to go as passengers to Baltimore.—He expected that his advertisement might bring together a dozen or score of people, but to his utter amazement, at the time when he stated that he could be seen, not merely the *house* but the *street* was filled with people, all clamorous which should be first to speak to him, but all most obviously without the means of paying for their passage. It was in vain that he explained that he could treat only with those who could pay five pounds for their passage.—The people still pressed upon him, shouting their willingness to be bound to give their labour in America until their wages should amount to the expense of conveying them there. Despairing of being able to make them understand his purpose, he retreated to his room where we found him literally besieged by these poor creatures, and it was not without difficulty that we succeeded in sending away those who had not the means of paying for their passage.—Out of a number which the Landlord estimated at six or seven hundred, there was found only one man able to go without mortgaging their labour for the expense of conveyance ! Here were six or seven hundred persons, all ready not merely to tear themselves from their native soil, but willing and eager to sell themselves to a temporary slavery, in order to obtain the means of escaping to what they considered a better land. What a scene in once free and happy England !

DANGER YET.—The great papal apostacy seems to be gaining strength, in some places, whilst the doctrines of the Reformation are rather in retrogression. In proof of this we advert to a single fact which has recently come under our observation. A clergyman of distinction, in the Church of England, has lately published several sermons in which he openly and strenuously advocates *union* betwixt the churches of England and Rome. The last number of the *Christian Review*, contains an examination of the principles of these discourses, and considers them a fair specimen of the doctrines held on the same subject by a large number in the church of England. This friend of *Catholic conciliation*, seems to hold in utter abhorrence the principles of those commonly termed Evangelical in the Establishment, whilst he views with great kindness and charity the deviations of the Papist from the assumed standard.

In our own land the defection comprising the Unitarians, the Universalists, and other forms of heterodoxy, is far from the torpor of supineness. The true gospel is boldly impugned, or else mangled with oblique interpretations. The native grandeur and simple force of Scriptural truth are impaired and frittered down by the extenuations of corrupt genius and perverted learning, and the study of the gay and thoughtless world is, to invent pleas for rejecting the authority of holy truth.

We allude to these subjects not from the pleasure of calling up to the mind of our readers images of portentous aspect, but from the warnings of that prudence which intimates the expediency of ascertaining, before we meet a

foe, the power which he will array against us. A false estimate of our strength may cause us to adventure too far, an exaggerated computation of our actual successes, may prove no less fatal to future conquest, than downright remissness. Let us hence learn to speak with modesty and diffidence about what has been accomplished, and with hope and prayerful solicitude about that which remains to be done.—*Col. Star.*

[From the Vermont Luminary.]

How to turn a falsehood into a Masonic truth; or, the way to render a moral sin a Masonic virtue.

MR. EDITOR,—I have, till of late, been quite at a loss to reconcile some of the statements of the members of the Grand Lodge, in their "appeal," with what I know to be true concerning the principles of Masonry. But since my attention has been attracted to critically examine one expression in that wonderful production; I find, on comparing it with the principles of the obligation, that it serves as a key to turn a falsehood into a *masonic truth*, and to render a moral sin a *masonic virtue*.

The expression to which I allude is the following: '*As Masons*, we declare,' &c. By comparing this with the following points in the obligations, we can not but see, that to be true masons, they must deny those principles which are disapproved by public opinion. For instance, "I will always hail, ever conceal, and never reveal, any part or part, art or art, of the secret arts and mysteries of ancient Freemasonry." Now, "*as Masons*," they are in duty bound to greet and approbate "*the secret arts*" of Masonry. Its principal secret art, evidently consists in those points which they deny. This they have sworn to conceal; and since it is disclosed, the only way to conceal it, is to deny the truth concerning it. Were they to own the truth, and frankly to acknowledge that the grand "*secret art*" of Masonry consists in "*striking*" to shed human blood, and in "*concealing the hand*," they would directly violate this obligation, and reveal the very "*secret art*" by which the institution has stood, and by which it now falls. Therefore it seems to be expedient to draw a line of discrimination in giving credence to the communications of Freemasons; and when they declare any thing "*as Masons*," give it the credit which their principles claim; but when they say any thing *as men*, give it the weight which their moral character seems to merit.

SECEDING MASON.

NEW MARRIAGE ACT,

Now in force in this State: Extracted from the Revised Statutes.

We have transcribed only so much of the Statute as relates to the duty of ministers of the gospel, and others authorized to solemnize marriage.

§ 8. For the purpose of being registered and authenticated according to the provisions of this Title, marriages shall be solemnized only by the following persons:

1. Ministers of the gospel and priests of every denomination:
2. Mayors, recorders, and aldermen of cities: and,
3. Judges of the county courts, and justices of the peace.

§ 9. When solemnized by a minister or priest, the ceremony of marriage shall be according to the forms and customs of the church or society to which he belongs. When solemnized by a magistrate, no particular form shall be required, except that the parties shall solemnly declare, in the presence of the magistrate and the attending witness or witnesses, that they take each other as husband and wife. In every case, there shall be at least one witness, besides the minister or magistrate, present, at the ceremony.

§ 10. It shall be the duty of every minister, priest, or magistrate, required to solemnize a marriage, to ascertain,

1. The christian and surnames of the parties; their respective ages and places of residence; and their profession, trade or occupation.
2. The names and places of residence of two of the attesting witnesses, if

more than one be present ; and if not, the name, and place of residence, of such witness.

He shall enter the facts so ascertained, and the day on which such marriage is solemnized, in a book to be kept by him for that purpose.

§ 11. If either of the parties between whom the marriage is to be solemnized, shall not be personally known to him, the minister or magistrate shall require proof of the identity of such party, by the oath of some person known to him ; which oath, any magistrate is hereby authorized to administer.

§ 12. Every minister or magistrate who shall solemnize a marriage, where either of the parties, within his knowledge, shall be under the act of legal consent, or an idiot or lunatic ; or to which, within his knowledge, any legal impediment exists, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, in the discretion of the court by which he shall be tried.

§ 13. Whenever a marriage shall have been solemnized within this state, pursuant to this title, the minister or magistrate by whom the marriage was solemnized, shall furnish, on request, to either party, a certificate thereof, specifying, " [the matters of fact which he is required to ascertain in section 10, previous to solemnizing the marriage.] "

DIED in the city of New-York, on the 27th of December last, the REV. JOHN M. MASON, D. D. in the 60th year of his age. He was the son of the Rev. John Mason, of whom mention is made in our last number, page 322. In noticing this event the *New-York Commercial Advertiser* has the following observation :—" No one who heard him speak in public, ever forgot his manner, which it was dangerous to imitate, and is impossible to describe. His memory, however, will not be preserved by the breath of tradition alone. He has left sermons, orations and controversial writings, stamped with the peculiar impress of his own mind, which may challenge comparison with any similar productions of the age ; and in which are to be found passages of the highest and least attainable order of eloquence ;—such as alone would make his name live in after ages, independent of the close reasoning, the sturdy developement of truth, the ingenious illustration, and the overpowering appeals to the reason and the immortal hopes of man, which are to be found in these remains." We agree with what is here said of his manner, as a public speaker ; while we observe that his life furnishes a correct specimen of a *popular* preacher, and the effect which is generally produced upon the interests of religion, by men of this stamp ; and this effect, as might easily be shown, has always been in a greater or less degree injurious. In such cases, the people run after the man, and their religion ebbs and flows in the same ratio with his popularity ;—and the man's genius cannot be restrained by the sober and unostentatious directions of scripture ; his ambition cannot be confined to a single ecclesiastical body ; and hence he becomes impatient of the restraints of church discipline, and " bursts its bands asunder." The whole religious world is not too large for him to figure in. And, in the presence of such a man, the humble, and unwearied, and scriptural, labours of his brethren, who are more zealous for maintaining pure and entire the ordinances of God than for an exhibition of this worldly show, pass for nothing with the people : they are tickled with his eloquence, and their fancy is pleased with the idea that he cannot fail to make religion appear lovely to all. And a great multitude run after him, who hate Christianity, when exhibited in its unadorned and simple majesty, frowning continually upon the pride of man—and in its awful holiness, either consuming all the corrupt propensities of human nature, and refining it as silver is refined by fire, or devouring it with everlasting destruction ; but, who, nevertheless, will do many things for it when adorned with human wisdom : while they completely banish all those peculiarities which render the gospel the most precious blessing of heaven. For the illustration of what we have said, the reader is referred to Dr. M.'s " Plea for free Communion," and the circumstances which occasioned it, and the bitter fruits which have followed it. These things are within the recollection of nearly all.